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## Dumfries House, Ayrshire: Assorted Dalrymples and Portrait of Lord Hardwicke

Posted on 23/01/2013 by [John Cairns](#)

Dumfries House gained considerable publicity when it was recently saved from two sales: first of the house and land, and secondly and separately of the magnificent furniture. The intervention of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales preserved this magnificent example of Palladian architecture – an early commission of Robert Adam – along with the furniture that its builder, William Crichton Dalrymple, the fifth Earl of Dumfries, bought for it from Thomas Chippendale and various skilled Edinburgh cabinet makers, including Francis Brodie, father of the notorious Deacon. Though sensitively extended around 1900 by the 3rd Marquess of Bute, the house is really a Georgian time-capsule of the 1750s and 1760s, and of great interest, particularly to your blogger as a specialist in eighteenth-century Scotland.

As well as obviously an interesting archival collection of interest to scholars relating to the building of the house and the ordering of the contents, from which it looks as if one might build a study of the legal framework of country-house development in Scotland, the house has a link with the great legal family of Dalrymple of Stair. Through both parents, the fifth Earl of Dumfries was a great grandson of James Dalrymple, Viscount Stair, writer of the *Institutions of the Law of Scotland*. Because of some complex issues relating to the descent of the Earldom of Stair, he also became briefly fourth Earl of Stair. The titles separated on his death, the Earldom of Stair going to his cousin John Dalrymple, while that of Dumfries went to a nephew, Patrick Macdouall Crichton. His second wife – and widow – Ann Duff, also had a Dalrymple descent through her mother, a daughter of Sir Robert Dalrymple of North Berwick. She later married the advocate Alexander Gordon, who became a Senator of the College of Justice as Lord Rockville.

Over the mantle in the beautiful blue drawing room in Dumfries house hangs a portrait of Philip Yorke, Lord Hardwicke (1690-1764), wearing the robes of the Lord Chancellor, an office he held from 1737 through various Whig administrations. The fifth Earl commissioned it from Thomas Hudson of London, who also painted Countess Ann. Hudson had painted other portraits of Hardwicke. The excellent guidebook to Dumfries House says this portrait was acquired because of Hardwicke's Whig views and anti-Jacobite stance with which Lord Dumfries will have identified. This is perfectly plausible; but one doubts that Dumfries will have felt the need to flaunt or demonstrate his Whig views, having served as a Hanoverian officer. Hardwicke had, however, exercised considerable influence over patronage, even in Scotland. He is also supposed to have learned Roman law to help him with Scottish cases in the House of Lords (ODNB).

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